



Returning Home After a Wildfire

Before returning home and starting clean-up, please read this section to ensure you have adequate safety measures in place.



1. What To Wear

- ☐ Boots, long pants and long-sleeved shirt.
- ☐ N95 mask to protect your lungs from smoke and ash. Follow instructions that come with the mask to make sure it fits properly.
- ☐ If you suspect asbestos may be present in debris, additional precautions should be taken with clothes and respirator.



2. Before Arriving / On The Way

- ☐ Confirm fire officials have declared your property safe to enter.
- ☐ Drive cautiously! Look for weakened or fallen trees, loose debris, damaged poles, rocks, and blocked roads/driveways.
- ☐ Keep an emergency alert device or radio on for weather and evacuation updates.
- ☐ Review evacuation plan and be prepared to leave again, quickly if needed.



3. Outside Property / Perimeter Inspection

- ☐ Carefully inspect trees and poles; avoid areas with deep charring, leaning, or instability.
- ☐ Look for smoldering embers on roof, gutters, downspouts, decks, crawl spaces, overhangs, wood piles, and debris piles.
- ☐ Walk driveway and entry path. Push debris to the side for temporary access.
- ☐ Stay away from any exposed utility hazards (damaged poles, wires, gas equipment). Report anything found immediately.
- ☐ Be alert to erosion or flood risk from burned slopes upstream.



4. Before Entering a Building

- ☐ Use a flashlight to inspect exterior first. Check roof, eaves, vents, basement/crawl space.
- ☐ Smell for gas around meters, tanks, and lines. If detected, leave immediately and call utility.
- ☐ Look for downed power lines. Avoid the area and contact utility.
- ☐ Ensure entry path and structure appear stable before going inside.



5. Utilities & Systems

- ☐ Ensure main electrical breaker is OFF before turning power back on. If meter is damaged, do not restore power.
- ☐ Turn off propane tank or heating-oil system until inspected; do not use if damaged.

- ☐ If using well water, have system inspected before drinking or cooking.
- ☐ Do not use tap water until authorities confirm it is safe.
- ☐ Have solar systems inspected by a licensed technician before use.



6. Entering & Interior Inspection

- ☐ Enter with caution; check for sagging ceilings, cracked walls, warped floors, leaks, or water damage.
- ☐ Check attic, crawl space, vents, and hidden areas for ash or embers.
- ☐ Test smoke alarms, carbon monoxide (CO) detectors, security systems, and emergency lighting.
- ☐ Discard any food exposed to heat, smoke, soot, or spoiled by power outage.
- ☐ Open windows and doors to ventilate smoke and odor if safe to do so.
- ☐ Document damage with clear photos for insurance purposes.



7. Cleanup & Intermediate Steps

- ☐ Begin debris removal only after local authorization and proper procedures.
- ☐ Clear flammable materials and create defensible space around home.
- ☐ Clean gutters, downspouts, and drains of ash, soot, and debris.
- ☐ Monitor slopes, hillsides, and drainage areas for erosion or debris-flow risks.
- ☐ Re-inspect daily, especially after wind or rain, for smoldering or new hazards.



8. Ongoing Safety & Follow-Up

- ☐ Arrange professional inspections for structural, electrical, and mechanical systems.
- ☐ File insurance claims and retain receipts for repairs and cleanup.
- ☐ Update wildfire evacuation and emergency plans.
- ☐ Remain vigilant for flash-flooding, falling trees, and delayed damage risks.
- ☐ Follow local recovery guidance and stay connected to emergency alerts and community resources.



9. Working with Your Insurance Company

- ☐ You are required by the terms of your homeowner's insurance policy to notify your insurance company within a reasonable period of time. Follow the guidance of your agent. They will request the fire incident number:

Old Trails Fire Incident #2026066294
(City of Spokane Fire Department & Fire District 10)

Stay Connected: <https://my.spokanecity.org/wildfireinfo>

